

**REMARKS**

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Claims 1 and 31 have been amended. Claim 44 has been added. Support for new claim 44 can be found at least in original claim 13. No new matter has been added.

This amendment changes and adds claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1-12 and 14-44 are now pending in this application.

***Allowable subject matter***

Applicant appreciates the indication that claims 17-43 are allowed.

***Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103***

Claims 1-6, 8, 10-12 and 14-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,351,394 to Enk (hereafter “Enk”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,486,811 to Wehrle (hereafter “Wehrle”). Claims 1, 5-10 and 12-16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,065,546 to Uetake et al. (hereafter “Uetake”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,415,870 to Matsuoka (hereafter “Matsuoka”) and Wehrle. Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections for at least the following reasons.

Independent claim 1, as amended, recites “at least one damage sensor indicative of physical damage to at least one of the piping network, the reservoirs, or the at least one valve.” The references cited in the above rejections fail to disclose such a damage sensor in the context of claim 1.

Enk discloses a system for aircraft protection including sensors 52, 61. The sensors 52 respond to different conditions, such as temperature or optical conditions (col. 5, lines 58-61), and are open at temperatures which are deemed safe, and close at a designated temperature (col. 5, lines 64-68). By contrast to the damage sensor of claim 1, however, the sensors 52, 61 of Enk merely detect temperature or an optical condition in a desired region,

the sensors 52, 61 are not disclosed as indicating damage to any of a piping network, reservoirs, or valve of the Enk system.

Uetake discloses a fire extinguishing and smoke eliminating apparatus with temperature detecting sensor 5 and smoke detecting sensor 7. By contrast to the damage sensor of claim 1, however, the temperature detecting sensor 5 or smoke detecting sensor 7 of Uetake merely detect temperature or smoke, respectively, in a desired region, the sensor 5 and sensor 7 are not disclosed as indicating damage to any of a piping network, reservoirs, or valve of the Uetake system.

Wehrle discloses a system including sensors including a carbon monoxide sensor 150, radiation sensitive flame detector 152, temperature sensor 154 and humidity sensor 156. By contrast to the damage sensor of claim 1, however, the sensors 150, 152, 154 and 156 are not disclosed as indicating damage to any of a piping network, reservoirs, or valve of the Wehrle system.

Matsuoka fails to cure the deficiencies of Enk, Uetake or Wehrle.

In sum, none of Enk, Uetake, Wehrle or Matsuoka disclose or suggest "at least one damage sensor indicative of physical damage to at least one of the piping network, the reservoirs, or the at least one valve" as recited in claim 1, and claim 1 is patentable thereover for at least this reason.

Dependent claims 2-12, 14-16, 41 and 44-45 ultimately depend from claim 1 and are patentable for at least the same reasons, as well as for further patentable features recited therein.

Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or

even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

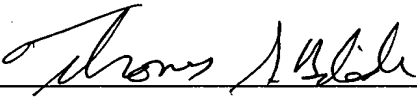
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FOLEY & LARDNER LLP

Customer Number: 22428

Telephone: (202) 672-5485

Facsimile: (202) 672-539

By 

Brian J. McNamara  
Attorney for Applicant  
Registration No. 32,789

Thomas G. Bilodeau  
Attorney for Applicant  
Registration No. 43,438